

MIDDLE EAST: ADVANCE COPIES 16

PS/ME WCE  
PS/FUS  
SIR J LEAHY  
MR SPERTON  
SIR J BULLARD  
ED/NEAD  
ED/RED  
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NO 10 DOWNING STREET

CABINET OFFICE D10

ED/CONSULAR DEPT

IMMEDIATE

ADVANCE COPY

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RESIDENT CLERK

CONFIDENTIAL

DESKBY 120600Z DAMASCUS

FROM WASHINGTON 120120Z JAN 84

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NO 116 OF 11 JAN

INFO IMMEDIATE DAMASCUS (FOR SECRETARY OF STATE'S PARTY) ROME  
PARIS BEIRUT AMMAN TEL AVIV ROUTINE CAIRO JEDDA UKMIS NEW YORK

RIYADH TELNO 10: LEBANON.

1. WE GAVE PELLETREAU THIS EVENING A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF YOUR CONVERSATION WITH PRINCE SAUD AND ASKED HOW RUMSFIELD WAS GETTING ON.
2. PELLETREAU SAID THAT IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE SYRIANS HAD GAINED THE IMPRESSION THAT THE MNF WOULD NOT LAST LONG. ACCORDING TO ELIE SALEM, KHADDAM TOLD HIM THAT THE AMERICANS WERE TRYING TO EASE OUT OF LEBANON AND SHIFT THE FOCUS TO THE CREATION OF AN EGYPTIAN/JORDANIAN/ARAFAT FRONT TO TACKLE THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION AFTER THE US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. THE SYRIANS WOULD COUNTER THIS PLOY AND FREEZE THE SITUATION IN LEBANON.
3. RUMSFELD SAW THE IMMEDIATE PRIORITY AS TO DISABUSE THE SYRIANS. AT HIS PROMPTING DAM HAD MADE IT CLEAR IN A STATEMENT TO THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE TODAY THAT IF CONGRESS WERE TO CURTAIL THE PERIOD OF AUTHORISATION OF THE MARINES THE SYRIANS MIGHT CONCLUDE THAT THE US WAS FINISHED IN LEBANON. SYRIA MUST NOT REACH SUCH A CONCLUSION. THE CONGRESS SHOULD CONVEY A STEADFAST MESSAGE IF THE US WERE TO BE SEEN AS SERIOUS ABOUT ITS SUPPORT FOR GEMAYEL, POLITICAL RECONCILIATION AND RUMSFELD'S NEGOTIATIONS.
4. PELLETREAU HOPED THAT YOU WOULD BE ABLE TO CONVINCE THE SYRIANS OF MNF CONTRIBUTORS' RESOLVE AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO

~~4. PELLETREAU HOPED THAT YOU WOULD BE ABLE TO CONVINCING THE SYRIANS OF MNF CONTRIBUTORS' RESOLVE AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO SUPPORT THE SECURITY PLAN AND TO ALLOW POLITICAL RECONCILIATION TO CONTINUE. FOR THE MOMENT THE SYRIANS SEEMED TO BE SUPPORTING THE SECURITY PLAN WHICH DID NOT AFFECT THEIR OWN INTERESTS IN LEBANON, PERHAPS IN THE HOPE THAT ITS IMPLEMENTATION WOULD OFFER A PRETEXT TO JUSTIFY WITHDRAWAL OF THE MNF. BUT JUMBLATT CONTINUED TO RAISE OBJECTIONS: THE US AMBASSADOR IN BEIRUT HAD MADE NO IMPRESSION ON HIM IN A LONG AND FRIENDLY TALK ON 9 JANUARY.~~

5. PELLETREAU SAID THAT KING FAHD HAD ADVISED THE LEBANESE NOT TO TAKE KHADDAM'S LATEST LINE TOO SERIOUSLY AND HAD ASSURED THEM THAT HE WOULD PRESS THE SYRIANS NOT TO BLOCK THE FORMATION OF A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY OR THE RECONVENING OF THE GENEVA TALKS. WE ASKED ABOUT THE SYRIAN LETTER AGREEING TO SIMULTANEOUS WITHDRAWAL WITH THE ISRAELIS WHICH PRINCE SAUD MENTIONED TO YOU. PELLETREAU SAID THAT SAUD HAD OFTEN REFERRED TO THIS LETTER BUT HAD NEVER SHOWN THE AMERICANS THE TEXT. IN ANY CASE IT PREDATED THE 17 MAY AGREEMENT WHICH HAD COME AS A SURPRISE TO THE SYRIANS. IN HIS VIEW THE SYRIANS HAD GIVEN ASSURANCES ABOUT THEIR WITHDRAWAL ONLY BECAUSE THEY WERE CONFIDENT THAT THE ISRAELIS WOULD NOT WITHDRAW.

6. MEANWHILE SENATOR TOWER HAS TESTIFIED ON BEHALF OF HIMSELF AND SENATOR WARNER TO THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE THAT EARLY WITHDRAWAL OF THE MARINES WITHOUT CLEAR EVIDENCE OF DIPLOMATIC SUCCESS WOULD SERIOUSLY DAMAGE US INTERESTS THROUGHOUT THE MIDDLE EAST AND UNDERMINE EFFORTS TO PROMOTE PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE REGION. THIS CLEAR VIEW FROM SENATORS WHO HAVE JUST BEEN TO BEIRUT WILL HELP TO HOLD REPUBLICAN OPINION IN CONGRESS STEADY BEHIND THE ADMINISTRATION'S LINE.

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